

W^h 60 at W^m Alline's 27 Septem: 1794

AN

I N Q U I R Y

INTO

The *Itinerancy*, and the *Conduct*

OF

The Rev. Mr. GEORGE WHITEFIELD,

An Itinerant Preacher:

VINDICATING

The former against the Charge of
Unlawfulness and *Inexpediency*,

AND

The latter against some *Aspersions*, which have
been frequently cast upon him.

By WILLIAM HOBBY, A. M.

Pastor of the first Church in *Reading*.

In a Letter to a Minister.

Matth. xxvii. 18. *For he knew, that for Envy they had delivered him.*

Prov. xxvii. 4. *Wrath is cruel, and Anger is outrageous: but who is able to stand before Envy?*

Invidiam placare paras Virtute relicta.

Hor.

Hoc semper fui, ut Invidiam Virtute partam, Gloriam putarem, non Invidiam. Cic.

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WILLIAM A. FORTY

Director of the American Museum of Natural History



A DEFENCE of the *Itinerancy*, and the
Conduct of the Rev. Mr. WHITEFIELD,
against some Exceptions frequently made.

In a LETTER, &c.

Reverend and dear Sir,

Y^{OUR}s I received, in which you urged my Thoughts on the Head of *Itinerancy*, and the Conduct of the Itinerant, the Rev. Mr. GEORGE WHITEFIELD. I am greatly loth to indulge your Request; for as the last Subject of our Conversation was that beautiful Description of true Religion, which St. Paul has given us in his 1st Epistle to *Timothy*, where he tells us, that *the End of the Commandment is Charity, out of a pure Heart, and of a good Conscience, and of Faith unfeigned*; so you may remember, I then observed, that had the good Apostle aim'd at the present Day, he could not have drawn it in more just and proper Colours, than in the *next Verse*, where he lets us know, that some having *swerv'd* from this Sort of Religion, or not duly aiming at it, *have turned aside unto vain Jangling*. Vain Jangling I may well call it; for I believe, you will readily allow me, that the Disputes of many have been more for Party-Interest, than a just Zeal for Godliness; for Victory, rather than Truth: and then no Wonder we have met with more Heat than Light, and found so many with Mouths full of Religion, while the unhallowed Manner of their Debates has demonstrated, they had none at Heart. Mr. Bolton, I remember, gives it as Part of the Character of the honourable Robert Boyle Esq; that he was scarce ever known to mention the Name of GOD without a visible *Pause*, silently adoring that great Being of whom he spake. Happy for us all, had we herein copy'd after him! But alas, how have those awful Terms, *God*, the *Son of God*, the *Spirit of God*, been tost about on many a Tongue in a vain Manner, as if GOD were *altogether such an one as themselves*. Sensible of these Things, I have endeavoured to *avoid foolish and unnecessary Questions*, and those *Babbings*, which the Apostle tells us, *increase unto more Ungodliness*, and have been in a Measure careful to suppress a disputatious Temper in my self, and the People of my Charge; in which, I hope, I have
neither

neither disserved my self nor them in the best Interests. Notwithstanding this, I am sensible there is a *Time to speak* (as well as a Time to keep Silence) and looking upon this to be such a Time, I now pass to consider those two Things you urge upon me relating to the Rev. Mr. *W—d*, as First the *Itinerancy*, and Secondly *his Conduct* in Itinerating.

I. With Respect to the *ITINERANCY*, several Things may be inquired.

1. Whether the Itinerancy be *contrary the Word of God*?
2. Whether on the Supposition that it is not contrary to the Word of God, it be not *lawful in it self*?
3. Whether it may not probably *subserve some good and valuable Ends*?

In the 1st Place let us inquire, Whether the *Itinerancy* be *contrary to the Word of God*?—Now by an *Itinerant*, is meant one who being ordained a Minister of Christ, and yet not having any particular pastoral Charge of his own, makes it his Business to go from Place to Place preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If such Itinerancy be contrary to the Word of God, I readily grant, we cannot well be too warmly engaged against it. *To the Law and to the Testimony*: Whatever is condemned by that, be it condemned of us also. But what have the strongest Opposers of Mr. *W—d* said upon the Head! Some Gentlemen of Note and Character have indeed urg'd what St. *Paul* tells the *Romans*, that he *strove to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest he should build on another Man's Foundation*: And the Example of the Apostle, say they, should give Law to our Behaviour. But this Argument, I think, stands in need of all the Character of the Gentlemen that have used it, to give it Weight; for it is a mere Argument *ab Autoritate Negativè*; which, to be sure, in Matters of Fact will not avail. The Apostle *Paul* did not, nor would not preach the Gospel *where Christ was named*; therefore no other Man must: Every one must at first Sight perceive the Falsity of the Consequence. The Truth is, some Things were done by the Apostles in their *extraordinary* Character, as Apostles; others done by them in their *ordinary* Character, as Ministers: Some Things done according to the particular *Circumstances* of Time and Place, which were then Matters of *Expediency*; others in the Virtue of a *standing Rule*, which holds good in all Places and at all Times, as Matters of *Necessity*. Therefore, as Dr. *Stillingsfleet* justly observes, “before an acknowledged apostolical Practice be looked on as *obligatory*, it must be made appear that what they did was not according as they saw Reason and Cause for doing it, depending upon the several *Circumstances* of Time, Place and Persons; but that they did it from some *unalterable Law* of Christ, or from such *Reasons* as will equally hold in *all Times*, Places and Persons: and so the Obligation is taken off from apostolical Practice, and laid upon that Law, and Reason, which was the Ground of it.” The Question then is, In what Light is St. *Paul*

and his Conduct to be viewed, in the cited Passage to the *Romans*? Undoubtedly as an *Apostle*, acting on the Foundation of *Expediency*. 'Tis plain, *St. Paul* there speaks of himself as an *Apostle* or Minister of the *Gentiles*: 'Tis plain, that he *magnifies his Office*, and glories in his Character; and that this might not appear Vain-Glory, he lets us know he acted a bold hardy Part, not contenting himself to preach where Christ was named already, and so build on another Man's Foundation, but carried the Name of Christ where those of Idols were mentioned, and Devils were adored; thus answering his Commission, which was to *go to the Gentiles, open their Eyes, & turn them from Darknes to Light*. The *Apostle St. Paul*, 'tis evident, preached in some Places where Christ had *already* been named, and so far he entred on other Men's Labours: but had he preached *only* in such Places, he would not have had so great Cause to glory. And therefore like a bold Champion he encounters the Powers of Darknes, fights the Devil in his own Territories, and turns his Worshippers from *Satan unto God*. And hence he draws the Conclusion in Favour of himself, that *he had whereof to glory thro' Jesus Christ*. — Now, What is there in all this, militating against *Itinerancy*? Or how doth the *Apostle's* Conduct reprove the *Itinerant*? May it not rather be said to approbate him, when we consider, that *Paul* tho' the *Apostle of the Uncircumcision*, preached the Gospel to the *Circumcision* too? Had *St. Peter*, the *Apostle of the Circumcision*, been of the same Temper with many in the present Day, methinks, he would have made his Assault on the Minister of the *Gentiles*, check'd his Forwardness, humbled his Pride, and reprimanded him as one that *stretched himself beyond his Measure, & boasted in another Man's Line*: Withal letting him know, that he was but a *Junior* *Apostle*, *born as it were out of due Time*. But *Peter* and *Paul* could well enough rejoice in one another's Labours, knowing that now there is *neither Circumcision, nor Uncircumcision, but all are one in Christ, and Christ is all in all*. But alas! Do you think that the Scripture saith in vain, *The Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to Envy*? Yet it must be lamented, that many do now by the most eminent Servants of Christ, what the Men of religious Character did by CHRIST himself, *deliver him for Envy*. But whatever may be the Behaviour of others, 'tis my present Design, and hope will ever be my Practice, be a Man's Character what it will, Friend or Opposer, so long as he preaches *the Truth as it is in Jesus*, to make him welcome to my Pulpit, my Arms, and my Heart. — I pass then to the next Question,

2. Whether upon the Supposition, that *Itinerancy* be not contrary to the Word of God, it mayn't therefore be look'd upon as *lawful in it self*? And here you answer me by saying, that 'tis not eno' for the Support of the *Itinerancy*, to say, that it is *not against* the Word of God, but we must find something for it: For it won't do, to appoint Officers in the Church of Christ, which he himself has not appointed.

I reply, Supposing that no *new Officers* are to be constituted in the Church of God, will this necessarily conclude against the *Itinerancy*? For my own Part, I have no Idea of an *Itinerant* as an Officer, under that special Character, nor doth Mr. *W—d* pretend to it, as I imagine. 'Tis true, he has told us, that he looks upon it as his Duty to *evangelize*; that is, as he in the next Words explains himself, *not to fix in any particular Place*.—The Rev. the President of *Harvard-College* is a Gentleman that has been ordained: Supposing then, that as he sometimes preaches at *Cambridge*, God should remarkably be with him, and crown his Labours with signal Success, so that with proper Invitations to a neighbouring Town, he should also preach there with the like Success, and so on from Town to Town, would any Man say, we had got a *new Officer* in the Church? I know not on what Foundation.—In a Word, The View in which I look on the Case is this: God has appointed the Office of the Ministry, and the Duty of Ministers is to preach the Gospel; but the particular *Manner*, in which the Gospel is to be preached, that is, whether the Minister must be fix'd in one Place, and preach stately there, or whether he may not preach from one to another, is with me but a meer *Circumstance*, which no Law has restrained, and therefore I think is lawful, agreeable to that known Maxim respecting an Exception to a general Rule, *firmat Regulam in non Exceptis*. And is not our own Practice agreeable in a Measure to all this? Yes, as the Pastors of the Churches take care of their own Flocks, so do they not also feed the Flocks of others, as Occasion serves? Do they not exchange Pulpits one with another? and when a Pastor dies, or is removed, or is aged and infirm, do not the neighbouring Pastors sometimes supply his Place, by Turns, for many Weeks or Months successively? Surely they *do*; surely they *may* do; and as surely they are so far *Itinerants*. So that whatever concludes against Mr. *W—d*, doth in a Degree conclude against our selves. — I go on then

3. To inquire, Whether the *Itinerancy* may not probably subserve some *good and valuable Ends*? If not, it seems necessary to oppose it as *inexpedient*, tho' it may'nt be condemn'd as unlawful: But if such Ends are *likely* to be *promoted*, why should not the *Itinerancy* it self be countenanced? I observe, the Gentlemen who so vehemently oppose the *Itinerancy*, go on this Supposition, that there is a certain *Order*, which God has fixed in his Church, that whosoever opposeth this Order is an Enemy to the Church, and ought every where to be spoken against. But is it not worthy of Consideration, that there is a certain *Faith*, which God has fixed in his Church? And is not this *Faith* more particularly fix'd in itself? Is it not more abundantly urged by God? Is it not more abundantly acceptable to him, and more abundantly beneficial to us, than any particular *Order* whatsoever? Hence we read of *one Spirit*, and *one Faith*: but *one* particular

particular, stated, invariable *Order*, I recollect not. Sure I am, when St. Paul salutes the Churches in general, 'tis their *Faith* and *Love* which are the Grounds of his Commendations; this he frequently makes honourable Mention of, when he says nothing of their *Order*: But where doth he smile upon their *Order*, without their *Faith*, and various Graces? When he addresses the *Colossians*, he lets them know that he *joys in beholding their Order*, and (it follows) *the Stedfastness of their Faith in Christ*. Could we suppose that Christians in general did thus *walk in the Faith and Order of the Gospel*, we would all allow the Church to be *fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun, and terrible as an Army with Banners*: But without this *Faith in Christ*, which is the Church's Conformity to her Lord, methinks the Sun and Moon too wou'd be in an awful Eclipse, and the whole Army of the Church, with Banners display'd, would lose all Terror. The Church will never terrify Earth or Hell, so long as it is not a Church *Militant*: and she cannot be militant without *Faith*, her best Weapon, and main Armour. Let it then be enquired, whether that be in fact the State of all professing Churches? And here that I may keep my self as much as possible out of Danger, I would ask my Reader to journey with me as far as *Maryland, Virginia, Carolina*, or take a Voyage to the *West-Indies*, even to *Jamaica*: Churches there are erected, and the Gospel there is preached, I am inform'd, full ten Minutes every Lord's Day, notwithstanding they have so much secular Business; an *Order* is visible in the Churches: but was the Apostle Paul to rise from his Grave, would he have any high Encomiums to bestow on many of 'em? would he tell them that he *rejoic'd in their Faith*? or would he not rather plainly tell them, that this was the Time he formerly spake of, when there should be a *Form of Godliness, without the Power of it*? Would he not roundly declare, that they were Christians without Christianity? Well, supposing this to be the Case, which I suppose most of us will allow, may not an *Itinerant*, or a Number of them, Men of good Gifts and Accomplishments, sanctify'd by the Spirit of God, Men jealous for the Lord God of Hosts, and zealous of good Works, be happily instrumental of joining *Faith* and *Order*, and primitive Christianity to the present Profession of it? Such a Man must indeed expect to meet with many *Adversaries*, as was the Case of St. Paul: But, like him, would he not probably find an *open Door and effectual* to the Admission of many Souls into the Kingdom of Heaven? Would not such a Preacher then do a Piece of Service, highly acceptable to God, beneficial to Men, and such as every Child of God ought to delight in?

It will be said here, Supposing this to be the Case, *What is it to the Purpose*? What have we to do with the *West-Indies* and such Places? Our Churches have the Gospel in its Purity, and walk in the *Faith* as well as *Order* of it. I answer, Whatever concludes for the *Itinerancy*, as such, concludes

concludes for it in one Place, as well as in another. If in it self it be lawful in the *West-Indies*, it is lawful in itself also in *New-England*: And whatever is urg'd against *Itinerancy* in *New-England*, is only an Argument against it as *needless, and out of Place*. But let us consider whether it be altogether needless among us. And here I will take for granted, what I really believe, that the Gospel is as faithfully preach'd in *New-England*, as in any Part of the World, in the Generality of our Churches; tho', God knows, it is preach'd but poorly enough in many of them, which with the Lives of its Preachers, has occasioned some late Dismissions, & probably may more.—But supposing the Gospel to be well preach'd, and practis'd too, in the Generality of our Churches; yet can it be imagin'd, that any one Minister should be suited to the Taste of all his Hearers? Besides, do not the most faithful concern'd pious Ministers find to their Sorrow, that after a while many poor Creatures grow Sermon-Proof; they are deaf to all the Thunders of Mount *Sinai*, and will not hearken to the Voice of the Charmer, tho' he charms never so wisely; many grow tir'd of the House of God, and leave it from Sabbath to Sabbath, Month to Month, and one Quarter of a Year to another, Complaints of which I have frequently heard! Now in this Case, may not the Servant of the Lord, filled with the Spirit of his God, go forth as it were into the *High-ways and Hedges, and compel such to come in, that God's House may be filled?* This, I am fully sure, has been the Case in one Place and another: and so Persons have been brought into the *Order of the Gospel*, which I hope won't be objected against. But further still, some of those Persons who had Ministers in Contempt, and the Church in Abhorrence, have been also brought into the *Faith* of the Gospel, and are at this Day Christians, and of an upper Class too. They who a few Years past spake nothing but the Language of *Ashdod*, speak now a different Tongue, the genuine Language of *Canaan*, and maintain a *Conversation in Heaven*.—Nor has the *Itinerancy* of the present Day reached merely to the People, in the Advantages of it, but to many of the *Clergy* themselves. It is a common Observation, That whatever Heights the Gospel has risen to in any Place, it has not kept its advanc'd Station long. Ministers habitually thinking that to Morrow would be as this Day, have remitted their Watch, either in regard of themselves, or others to be introduc'd into the Gospel-Ministry: to be sure, this holds good in respect of *New-England*. For however eminent most of our *Fathers* were for Piety, a close Walk with God, and great Serviceableness to Men, yet that a proper *Watchfulness* over the Pulpits of *New-England*, has been greatly *decaying*, is what has been and still is for a *Lamentation*. In Consequence of this Remisness, many have been admitted into the Ministry, of inferior Knowledge, loose Principles, and to say no worse, of poor Lives; or rather shall I say, that some have been admitted into Christ's Pulpits, who perhaps

perhaps were not fit to be received into his Church ! Instances of this Nature might easily be produc'd, in too great Plenty : And I need not go far for some of them neither. Now to some such Persons has the *Itinerancy* of the present Day been abundantly *blest*'d (as *Ten* or *Twelve* of them have chearfully own'd) to bring them to a just Sense of themselves, fix them on better Principles, make them more zealous for their Master's Honour, and concerned for their People's Welfare. --- I will go further yet, and say that some of the greatest *Opposers* of the *Itinerancy* have declared, they look'd upon *themselves* as *benefitted* by the Preaching of the *Itinerants* : Yea, and further still, if we may believe the *Hearers* of many of the *Opposers*, even *they* are really *better Men*, and *better Preachers* : And tho' I dare not lay this down as a general Rule, yet I am prone to think this holds good with Regard to some Ministers ; and to be easily accounted for : The *Knowledge* which has increased among the *People*, has made some *Ministers* more watchful in Point of *Doctrine*, and the *Holiness* of the *People* has made them more exemplary in their *Walk*, and Watchfulness over their *Lives*. Thus as the *Itinerancy* doth, as I think, tend to *good* and *valuable Ends*, so thro' divine Grace, it has been happily effectual to them. Things that were *weak*, in many Places, have been *strengthened*, and those which were *ready to die*, are in a measure *revived*. In one Word, Many *foolish Virgins* have gone forth and bought Oyl, and many *wise Virgins* have trimmed their Lamps. ---- But it will here be said,

Supposing that a great deal of *Good* has been done, which has been freely acknowledged, yet has there not much *Evil* accompanied it ? Is there not in many Places a lamentable *Alienation* of the Affections of *People* from their *Ministers*, by which their *Usefulness* is greatly endangered ? Yea, have there not been *Separations* among us, which are yet likely to increase ? Are there not *Feuds*, *Animosities*, *Heart-burnings*, *Schisms*, and what not ! ---- I confess, *I have heard that there are Divisions* in the Churches, and *I partly* (yea, as to some I fully) *believe it*. But do these Things necessarily, in the Nature of Things, flow from the *Itinerancy* ? Is this properly *causal* of them ? I trow *Not* ; but rather I think, that *Sin taking Occasion* by the *Itinerancy*, has wrought all manner of *Evil*. Considering Mr. W--- as an *Itinerant*, doth he preach *any other Gospel*, than that which Christ and his Apostles have preach'd ? Were this the Case, I would say with the Apostle, *Let him be accursed*. But doth he not preach the *same Faith*, the *same Lord*, the *same Baptism* ? 'Tis true indeed, he is in *Labours more abundant*, in *Zeal more flaming*, and in *Success more remarkable* : And this it is that has made such an Uproar in *Hell*, and so much Confusion on *Earth* : this has opened the Mouths of the *profane*, and fill'd the secret *Hypocrite* with Indignation and Wrath, and (I fear) stirr'd up the Corruptions of many a *good Man*. Such *Evils* as these, as they ever were, so I doubt not but they ever will be, the close Followers of enlivened Zeal and animated Piety. Thus

it was when the Son of God himself was the Preacher ; tho' he was *holy, harmless, undefiled* in his Person, and perfect in his Example : tho' his Doctrine breathed *Glory to God, Peace on Earth, and Good-will towards Men*, yet foreseeing the Confusions of the World, he tells his Disciples, *I am come to send Fire on the Earth ; and what will I if it be already kindled ?* That is, as Dr. Doddridge paraphrases it, " After all that I have said to promote " Humanity and Charity, yet it will in *Fact* appear, that *I am come to send " Fire upon Earth ;* so opposite is my Doctrine to the Prejudices and Lusts " of Men, and such are the violent Contentions that my Gospel will occa- " sion, thro' the Wickedness of those among whom it is preached : And yet " what do I wish ? that the Gospel might be suppressed ? Nay, but I ra- " ther say, Oh that this *Fire*, fierce as it shall be, were *already kindled*, by " the universal Propagation of a Religion, whose *Blessings* so abundantly " counterbalance all the accidental *Evils*, which can attend it ! " --- It will doubtless here be said, our Saviour came to set up a *new Religion* in the World, to make us Christians : And are we not Christians ? Do you not your self allow, that Christianity is preached, and well preached too, in the Generality of our Churches ? --- 'Tis granted, our Saviour came to set up a new Religion, and that we are called Christians : But is our Saviour's Religion a *new Name*, or a *new Nature* ? if only a new Name, I can hardly persuade my self, the Devil would have made so much Opposition to it ; 'twould not have greatly displeased him, to have *jewish* Men and *heathenish* Practices baptised by a *Christian* Name. But if the Christian Religion be a new Nature, whenever *this* is like to be form'd & propagated, I humbly conceive, it will stir up the Resentment of *Hell* at one Time, as well as at another. 'Tis not the *Form*, but the *Power of Godliness*, that gives so much Disturbance to *Satan*. Agreeable to this, our Saviour says to his Disciples, and to us in them, *If ye were of the World, the World would love his own ; but because ye are not of the World, but I have chosen you out of the World, therefore the World hateth you.* Upon which the foremention'd learned and ingenious Author notes, " This seems to be a strong Intimation, that even " in Nations which *profess Christianity*, if true Religion fall, as it very pos- " sibly may, to a very low Ebb, they that exert themselves remarkably for " the *Revival* of it, must on the very *Principle* here laid down, expect *Ha- " tred and Opposition*; and that the Passages in Scripture relating to *Persecuti- " on* are not so peculiar to the *first Ages*, or to Christians living in *idolatrous* " Countries, as some have supposed. Would to God, the *Malignity* to be " found in some of *us* against our Brethren, did not too plainly illustrate this " Remark. Men will probably experience the Truth of it, in proportion " to the Degeneracy of those around them, and to the Vigour and Resolu- " tion, with which they bear their Testimony against prevailing Errors " and Vices. Yet it is certain, that the Imprudence and Bigotry of some " very good Men has sometimes made Matters worse than they would " otherwise

“ otherwise have 'been, and perhaps has irritated the Vices of their “ Enemies, so as in Part to have been accessary to their own Damage.” To say no more here, had the Pulpits in *New-England* been open to Mr. *Whitefield*, and had he been treated as a *Brother*, I cannot but think, by the usual Blessing of God on his Ministry, Conversions would have been multiply'd, and the Churches edify'd, as I am confident they have been where he has met with such Reception. So that whatever be the Judgment of *others*, I shall ever give it as *mine*, that 'tis not the *Itinerancy*, but the *Opposition* to it, that has made the Confusions of the present Day.

If it be said, after all, should we give way to the *Itinerancy* in one Gentleman whom God has *peculiarly form'd* and *accomplish'd* for such a Design, then *where shall we End*? May not Men of *bad Principles* and *disorderly Conduct* insinuate themselves among us? And are we not then in Danger of being unhing'd, divided and distracted? I reply, the Objection doth in some Measure answer it self; for it speaks of Mr. *W----* as one whom God has *peculiarly form'd* and *accomplish'd* for the *Itinerancy*: And I readily grant it, I never yet have met with the Man so *peculiarly form'd* for such a Design, one that has a good Stock of Knowledge as a Scholar, and much more as a true Christian, one that has a good Head, a warm Heart, a graceful Gesture, and a voluble Tongue, one humble towards God, and bold in Respect of his Fellow-Creatures. Tho' some among us may exceed that Gentleman, in *one* or *other* of those Particulars, I know of none that equals him in them *all* collectively. Now, if this be the Case, I say, the Argument is peculiarly strong for receiving Mr. *W----*. But I will suppose that others may arise after him, and *bad* Men too, because this ever has been the Case. When GOD sent forth his Prophets, the Devil had his *false* Prophets. Has GOD sent forth his Son CHRIST? the Devil has sent an *Antichrist*. Did CHRIST send forth his *Apostles*, and did not Satan send forth such as *said they were Apostles, and were not, but were Lyars*? What then shall be done? Shall we refuse *Christ's Apostles*, because Satan has his? I would say to such Objectors, Pray Gentlemen, would you do thus by your *Money*? Would you reject a Piece of *Gold*, because you have seen a *brazen* Thing, speciously counterfeited? If you were under Doubts, would you not go to a Standard? Well, let us put on the same Conduct with Regard to *Itinerants*; Try the *Spirits* by the Word of God, and the everlasting Reason of Things: such evangelical Disposition, and such a Behaviour, being acceptable to God, I cannot think we have much to fear from this Quarter.

Upon the whole, I will take Leave to ask the warm Opposers of *Itinerancy*, what their *real Tho'ts* are of the Conduct & Success of the *Dissenting Ministers* in *England*, after the famous *Act of Uniformity* had cast them out of the publick Churches, and the Law had silenc'd 'em. Whoever reads Dr. *Calamy's* Account of the Ejected Ministers, will find many of them continuing the Exercise of their Ministry, thro' all the Rigours of King

Charles

Charles and King James's Reign : preaching the Word, publicly or privately, here and there, wherever they could get an Auditory, wherever a Door of Opportunity was open'd, tho' at the same Time there were many Adversaries ; and notwithstanding there were Ministers, upon the Establishment, settled every where thro' the Land, who doubtless thought they faithfully and fully preached the Gospel.---Yet were not our silenced Brethren in Labours more abundant ? preaching up and down the Country, sometimes every Day in the Week ; and in the Times of stricter Restraint, preaching in the Night Season, for Privacy, and in Caves and Pits, venturing their Health and Life to save poor perishing Sinners. Often would they go out into the Lanes and common Grounds, into the Woods and Fields, that they might worship God without Molestation. They would go into desert Places, and sometimes continue there many Months, to spend their Pains among poor People, who were glad to have the Gospel preached to them.---Yea, when thrown into Jail, for the great Crime of preaching the Word and administering the Sacraments, they us'd there to preach out of a Window, to People standing in the Street, and many acknowledg'd, they ow'd their Conversion to these Prison-Sermons.---And the Itinerant Ministrations, in general, are said to have done great Service to the Interest of Religion ; notwithstanding the Divisions, Contentions, & Confusions, by some so loudly complain'd of from Pulpit & Press, as occasion'd thereby.---Now I would ask the Opposers of Itinerancy, was all this a false Zeal, or not ?---Did these Ministers judge rightly, or not, when they held themselves bound in Conscience, not to desist from their Work, though cast out of the publick Churches, and silenc'd by Authority ?---Were they chargeable justly, or not, with Violence and Intrusion, when they preach'd in other Ministers Parishes, and in any Place where the People desir'd them, though without the Leave of the Incumbent, and without any License from the Bishop of the Diocess ?---When they suffer'd for so doing, was it in a good Cause, or a bad ? When any of them perish'd in Prison, did they die as Fools, or not ?---And the Success of their Ministry, was it true and real, or only false and pretended ?---Sure I am, both their Conduct and Success, their Labours and Sufferings, are spoken of with Applause, to the great Honour of their Memory, by such Men as Mr. Baxter, and Dr. Calamy, in their Histories of those Times. And is there any such mighty Difference between the Itinerancy of that Day, and the Itinerancy of our Day, as to render the same Thing a Crime now, which was a Virtue then ?---But if they will not allow these Cases to be parallel, what do these Gentlemen think of Mr. Baxter, Mr. Lorimer, Mr. Billio, and others, who in Times of Publick Indulgence & Liberty, never had a settled Congregation, and would accept of no Pastoral Care, but remained Ministers at large, only assisting their Brethren occasionally ? They preach'd

preach'd at a Variety of Places, as they were invited, and were some of them constantly employ'd. Dr. Calamy says of Mr. Billio, in particular, "That he preach'd *six or seven Times a Week*; and his Preaching did much Good. There are in *many Parts* of *Essex* such as own him to "have been their spiritual Father." Mr. Machin was another useful *Itinerant*. So Mr. Oasland, one of those whom Mr. Baxter recommended for a *Lecturer*, to confront the Devil's *Itinerants*, in the Time of the *Interregnum*, and who was favour'd with *surprizing Success*. Of whom Dr. Calamy gives this Account. "He was as lively, fervent, and moving "a Preacher as any in the County: Who rode about from Place to "Place, preaching fervently, and winning many Souls to God; besides "his very great Labours among his own People, publickly and from "House to House. After he was cast out, he still continued preaching "up and down privately, where he could get Opportunity, with Zeal "and Diligence.---In the very hottest Part of King Charles's Reign, he "preach'd in *Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Herefordshire, Warwickshire, "Worcestershire, Staffordshire, and Shropshire*. But when the Indulgence "was granted, he confin'd himself to the *four latter Counties*; in which "there are many to whom his Memory to this Day is precious, and "who can with Pleasure tell the Time and the Place and the Text he "preach'd on, that first occasion'd their minding Religion in earnest.--- "Some have *cried out*, in the Congregation, and a sleepy Hearer was "seldom seen, under his Ministry." Now what do the Gentlemen that oppose *Itinerancy*, think of this Mr. Oasland? Do they really think him in a *wrong Way*, while travelling about, preaching from Place to Place? Do they really think, he had no such *Success* as is reported of him? Or do they really think his Success no Argument of God's *owning him*? What do they make of this Saying of Dr. Calamy's? "I confess, with me, *Success* is the best Proof of God's *owning* any Man as a *Minister*."

But I now pass,

II. To consider the *Conduct* of our *Itinerant*. Had it not been for some Things in the *Itinerant*, we should, I believe, have had little objected to the *Itinerancy*.

Here I cannot but confess my Astonishment at an *Objection* rais'd against him by some Gentlemen, That in *England* he is a *Churchman*, in *Scotland* a *Kirkman*, here he is a *Dissenter*, and there an *Anabaptist*: That is, he has Communion with *all* those Churches, and therefore ought to have Communion with *none*. Whatever of *Form* there is in these Objections, I am sure, there is no *Comeliness*. 'Tis a plain Confession, that they who make it, are Slaves to a Scheme of Discipline, and the Bigots of a Party-Religion. For my own Part, I never thought, any Man among us so bigotted to any of these Churches, as to *confine Salvation* to one

one, or *refuse Communion* to another. Dr. Mather, I remember speaks of Persons of *seven* different Perswasions as sitting down together at the Table of the Lord in *his Church*; and glories in the Sight, and so should I too, little thinking that it will be ask'd in the Day of Judgment, whether I was Churchman, or Dissenter. Faith in Christ, manifested by an Holy Life, will (I believe) be the Term of God's Acceptance, and therefore shall be of mine. Excellently well did Mr. *W---d* answer such Bigots as would have imprisoned him within their Churches, when he told 'em, *that he had but one Design, which was to hew Stones for the Temple of God, and leave him to lay them where he pleas'd.* However then this Objection may alienate him from others, I am sure it indears him to me.

Again, the Populace is alarmed with this Suggestion, that Mr. *W---d* is a *perjur'd Man*. How so? because being censured by Commissary Garden, he appeal'd home to his Majesty in the High Court of Chancery, and gave Oath to the Prosecution of such Appeal; but has intirely neglected it.---- Thus the poor People by a few crafty ill-designing Men, are gull'd into a Belief, that Mr. *W---d* is a vile abominable Creature, and so shut their Ears against him. But is not his Righteousness clear as the Light, and does it not appear by a bare Narration of the Case? The Truth of which is, Mr. *W---d* being summoned before Mr. Commissary Garden, to answer for some supposed Misdemeanors, exhibited some Exceptions against the Commissary as Judge, and then chose three Arbitrators, as in such Case is provided, leaving it to the Commissary to choose three more, whose Award was to determine him guilty, or not guilty: Mr. Commissary refused the Exceptions. Upon which Mr. *W---d* appeal'd Home, and gave Oath to prosecute his Appeal in twelve Months; accordingly he went Home, and exerted himself to the utmost to get a Hearing (which he now proves by an *Affidavit*, taken before the Lord Mayor of London by himself and his Solicitor) but all in vain. What is there then, in all this, that concludes against Mr. *W---d*? Was the Court, to which Mr. *W---d* appeal'd, sensible or suspicious of any Offence in him? Or were their Lordships engaged in Mr. *W---d*'s Cause so far as not to condemn the Guilty? A manifest Contempt is put upon Mr. Commissary Garden's Prosecution: But Mr. *W---d* must be allow'd to stand *Rectus in Curia*, his Enemies themselves being Judges.

We now come to another Objection against Mr. *W---d*, and that shall be *Argumentum Pecuniarium*. Objections of this Nature are generally pretty strong: If People can but be convinced, that they have lost their *Moneys*, that their *Moneys* are embezzled, which they consecrated to pious Uses, popular Clamour must be supposed to rise high. Accordingly 'tis said, Mr. *W---d* received a great Deal of Money in Behalf of the Orphans in Georgia; for which he promised to be accountable in the

the Disbursements of it ; but no such Account has been exhibited.---- I would ask such Gentlemen, in the first Place, *What do you think he has done with the Money ?* Has he bought Houses and Lands ? Pray where are they ? If he has made such Purchases, he must have purchased them of Some-Body ; there must have been Instruments drawn, that would have past through the Hands of Lawyers, Clerks, Recorders : Had he then been that *wicked Man*, that is suggested, must he not have been in Danger of being detected, especially considering the *Enmity* of the World against him, and how much that Person would be caress'd and applauded, who should expose him to the just Resentments of the World ? ----Or have you Malice enough (Gentlemen) to suppose, that all those Persons have *confederated* with Mr. *W---d* in the supposed Villany ? Consider (Gentlemen) whether while Mr. *W---d*, at least in the general Course of his Life, appears closely to walk with God, whether (I say) your Objections against Mr. *W---d* do not prove that great *Corruption* in you, which you vainly endeavour to father upon him.----Further here, a few Months past Mr. *W---d* was supposed to be hovering upon the Verge of Eternity, when he *set his House in Order*, and made his Will, *how much* then do you think *he gave to satisfy for the Sin of his Soul ?* or how much *bad* he to give ? not so much as one of our Clergy, in a pitiful Parish, supported by an Hundred a Year, Old Tenor.----But to be more direct, in Answer to the Objection, let me say, that *Accounts* of Money, received and disbursed, have been already published, both in *England* and *Scotland* ; when he began with accounting for six Pence and Shillings, but it being like to swell the Accounts to a great Bulk and Price, he at the Desire of his Friends, who suggested that his Honesty was never called in Question, went from a particular to a more general Account. These Accounts, Copies of which are numerous in other Places, and some of them are among ourselves, did in the bare Publication of them amount to no less than *thirty-five Pounds Sterling*, Expence. And is not this all that Mr. *W---d* promised ? and all that could rationally be expected from a Man whose Honesty had not been us'd to be called in Question ? ----But by this Time I suppose another Objection is at Hand : and some are ready to say, *Is the Man fit to have the Care of Orphans, who takes that Money which we consecrated to their Support & Comfort, and prostitutes it to the Support of his own Character ?*----Poor Gentleman, how much are you to be pitied ! if you publish your Accompts, you steal from the Orphans : and if not, you must be look'd upon as a general Thief, that picks the Pockets of the World.---But rather more unhappy they, who seem resolute that they never will be satisfy'd, and then demand Satisfaction. Is not such a Conduct too near akin to that of them, who of Old said to the great Saviour of the World, *Come down from the Cross, and we will believe thee !* that is, Do what *must not* (cannot) be consistent with the Design

Design and Office of the *Messiah*, and then we will believe that *thou art he, and will not look for another*. But I pass to some other Exceptions.

A frequent Objection, is, That Mr. *W-----d* is an *Enthusiast*. But sure I am, if Mr. *W-----d* has no other Evidence bro't against him, than what I find in that Piece which is the Produce of the *College*, he is far less of an *Enthusiast*, than some even of his Friends have apprehended him. Mr. *W-----d* has taken Notice of some *Dreams*: and I believe there are but few Persons, who in the Course of twenty or thirty Years have not met with some worthy their Notice, how great a Contempt soever they have of Dreams in general. 'Tis granted, that *Dreams* ordinarily arise from a *Multitude of Business*, as *Solomon* suggests: but doth not *Elibu* tell us, that *God speaketh to Man in a Dream*, as well as in other Manners? And tho' I profess no Fondness for *Dreams* in general, I would offer it to Consideration, Why the Spirit of God should take Care to record the *Dream* of *Pilate's Wife*, respecting our Saviour. To be sure she took Notice of this, if she disregarded all that ever she had before. Beyond all Question, the *Dream* was from God: And doth it not look as if God would have had *Pilate* taken some Notice of it, as well as his Wife? And doth it not seem to be set down, as an Aggravation of his Guilt, that he did not? ----- But 'tis said, that Mr. *W-----d* conducts himself by his *Dreams*. One would think, that the Meaning of this is, that this he doth customarily and professedly; or makes a *Bible* of his *Dreams*. By all Means then, let him be rejected! But how is it proved? Why, Mr. *W-----d* pray'd, that God would open a Door to visit the *Prisoners*; quickly after, he dreamt that one of the *Prisoners* came to be instructed by him; the *Dream* was imprest upon his Heart, and in the Morning he went to the Door of the Goal. --- But has Mr. *W-----d* told us, that his *Dream* was in answer to his Prayer, and that his Conduct was directed by his *Dream*? It will be said here, How came he to go to the Goal? And I answer, In Consequence of that Concern which he had for the *Prisoners*, which was the Ground of his Prayer. And indeed, had he been guided by his *Dream*, he must have kept at home, waiting for the *Prisoner*, and not gone to him. --- But you will say here, Could the poor *Prisoner* come to Mr. *W-----d*? I answer, Let the *Prisoner* look to that: Mr. *W-----d* must (*ex Hypothesi*) keep close to his *Dream*. --- After all, My Affection to Mr. *W-----d* has not so far brib'd my Judgment, as to think him intirely free from all Appearance of *Enthusiasm*. Some Expressions of his favour too apparently of it: which, I believe, he will readily acknowledge. But further, I must say, that in my Acquaintance with the Persons and Writings of Men of great Piety, I have met with an apparent Tincture of *Enthusiasm*, as truly as in Mr. *W-----d*; and yet their Persons and Labours were always had in Esteem and Honour. A renowned Doctor, I remember, had a strong Impression upon his Mind, that

a particular *Jew* would certainly be converted to the *Christian* Religion : and this he retain'd, 'till upon the Death of the Man in the *Jewish* Principles, his Friend wrote to him,—*And now Dr. where are your Prophecies ?* Whoever reads Mr. *Flavel*, cannot but take Notice of a certain *Dream* that greatly affected him. Dr. *Hammond* was far enough from an Enthusiast, and yet Dr. *Fell* in his Life mentions a wonderful *Dream*, that as wonderfully affected the Dr. In like manner Dr. *Calamy* in his Life of the great Mr. *Howe*, informs us of his having recorded in the Frontispiece of his Bible “ a most ravishing and delightful *Dream* he had one Morning ; which he often afterwards with great Complacency reflected on, as a very signal Pledge of special Divine Favour vouchsafed to him on that memorable Day.” Mr. *Henry*, no Enthusiast in his general Character, has likewise (in his Diary) recorded a *Dream*, that made a great Impression upon him.—So Mr. *Henry* having given an Account of a great Victory, concludes with saying, “ Thus hath God answered the Prayers even of me.” And in another Place takes Notice, “ That on the Day which was solemnized as a Day of “ Thanksgiving, the Garrison of *Ostend* marched out.”—And had not Mr. *Baxter* (the furthest from Enthusiasm) a remarkable *Impulse* in preaching, to declare his Belief of some notable *Judgment* speedily coming on a particular Place, where he then was ?—And hundreds of other Instances might easily be bro't, relating to Persons of the greatest Piety and solid Judgment, before such as (notwithstanding these Instances) never were branded as Enthusiasts. Indeed I have sometimes tho't Men of eminent Piety to be in eminent Danger of *Enthusiasm* : for while the Wicked regard not the Lord, nor the Operation of his Hands, a remarkably good Man has Communion with God in *Providences*, as well as Ordinances, and having at some Times, found strong Impressions on his Mind, with regard (e.g.) to such and such Blessings to be bestowed, these he carries to the Throne of Grace, there earnestly and importunately urges his Case with God ; and by and by observing the Dispensations of Providence, he understands the *Loving-kindness of the Lord*, and finds that God has given him a remarkable Answer of Prayer. Now this being the Case, which, I believe, none that have any *Conversation in Heaven*, will doubt of, the Man hereafter finding some other strong Impressions upon his Mind, in themselves not contrary to the Word of God, is too ready to look upon these as of a *Divine Original*, and to expect further Communications from God. All this may (I think) easily be supposed, without any the least Charge upon Religion, which countenances no *Enthusiasm* ; but it results from the *Weakness* of the Man, secretly mixing itself with the *Graces* of the *Christian*. And perhaps this may have been Mr. *W—d*'s Foible. He has had, I believe, as many remarkable Answers of Prayer, as any of us : Yet very possibly he may have at some times mistook his own Imagination for a Divine Impression. But let me ask the Gentlemen, who are

so fierce in their Attack on Mr. *W—d*, Is the Run of Mr. *W—d*'s *Diary*, or the Course of his *Preaching*, such as discovers him to have any *slight* Tho't of the *Word* of God, or tends to draw off others from their Regards to it? If he has had any strong *Impressions* on his own Mind, doth he immediately conclude them of a *divine Extract*? or doth he not, only, lay them up in his Mind, and leave it with the Providence of God, in Subordination to his *Word*, to put the Construction upon them? When lately preaching at the Rev. Dr. *Sewall*'s, upon a *Walk with God*, as he then urged a strict Observance of God's *providential Dealings*, so I well remember, that he directed to the greatest Care in comparing God's Providence with his *Word*, without which we were in the greatest Danger. And this being the Case, what have we to apprehend from such a Preacher? Is not all such Fear but a meer Pretence, or at most a Fear where no Fear is? —

A like Objection is bro't against Mr. *W—d* for talking of *inward Feelings*. But where is the Ground of this Objection? Do we not sensibly feel the *Corruption* of our fallen Nature? And why may not the real Christian as sensibly feel the *Graces* of the divine Nature? Do we not feel an *evil Spirit* working in us; feel our Pride, our Passion, our Enmity to God, and his People? And why may we not feel the *Motions* of a *good Spirit*, in kindling our Repentance, raising a Flame of Love to God, and all that resemble him? Have not many of us felt the Spirit of *Bondage*, filling our Consciences with Remorse, and our Souls with Distress? so that with the *Psalmist*, we have cried out, *Thy Wrath lieth hard upon me*; or with *Cain*, *My Punishment is greater than I can bear*. Now in what Sense this *Wrath* doth lie hard upon us, without being felt, or how it is that this *Punishment* is intolerable, and yet not so much as felt, I confess I understand not. And why may we not feel the Spirit of *Adoption*, as well as the Spirit of *Bondage*? Why not feel the *Peace* of our Consciences, as well as their Remorse? Why not feel the *Love of God shed abroad in our Hearts*, as well as the Love of the Creature? And why not feel a *Joy* in God? Surely as the Rev. *President* has told us in his Convention-Sermon, "The Saint may feel this very sensibly, and it is a *joy unspeakable and full of Glory*." — But we are yet told, that this Metaphor of *Feeling* is too gross. Why so? is it because the Object of feeling is applied to the Organ? But is not this the Case also in *Tasting*? We can see Things at a Distance, but not taste them: But mayn't we, not only see, but also taste, that the Lord is good & gracious? Let the *Psalmist* and St. *Peter* be the Judges. *Psal.* 34. 8. *1 Pet.* 2. 3. — To say no more here, Will such Gentlemen please to examine themselves, whether they don't feel the Corruptions of a bad Spirit, while they are taxing Mr. *W—d* for speaking of *inward feeling*, and *feeling the Spirit of God*? For my own Part, I would not give an Half-penny for a Religion that could not be felt.

But

But to rise in our Objections, let us in the next Place consider that which relates to the COLLEGES ; concerning which Mr. *W—d* says, *I believe it may be said of them, their Light is now become Darkness, Darkness that may be felt.* On Account of this Expression, Mr. *W—d* has in common Conversation been tax'd as a *lying Fellow*, by many from whose Lips we might have expected more of *the Law of Kindness, & Speech seasoned with Salt.* And in a Pamphlet from *Harvard-College*, we find him charg'd with *Slander and Falshood.* I confess, that upon the first View of that Piece, I could hardly perswade myself to believe it the genuine Produce of the College. First, because the Performance did not seem equal to the *Ingenuity and good Sense* of the Subscribers, especially of several of them. Secondly, because the *Spirit* of it did not equal the Idea which I had of their *Christianity.* And Thirdly, Because the *Stile* of it did not appear perfectly *harmonious* with what I find deliver'd by the very worthy *President* in his excellent *Sermon* preach'd before the *Convention.* For there those *Inward Feelings* are asserted (see *Sermon*, P. 34,) which in the Pamphlet from *Cambridge* are condemn'd.—There Mr. *W—d* (undoubtedly) is represented as a *pious and valuable Man of God*, who thro' his abundant *Labours* had been greatly *instrumental in reviving a blessed Work ; in which many, no Doubt, had been savingly converted from the Error of their Ways, many more convicted, and all in a Measure roused from their Lethargy.* (See *Sermon* P. 23.) Whereas in the *College-Testimony* he is represented as *Censorious, Slanderous, Rash, Arrogant, guilty of a wicked and libellous Falshood.*—And although in the *Sermon* the *President* assures his *Audience*, that the *Society* hath not deserved the *Aspersions* which have of late been made upon it, yet the *Report*, disadvantageous as it was, he doubted not, proceeded from a *godly Jealousy for the Churches of Christ*, which are supply'd from the College. I could hardly think that a Gentleman, who doubted not of the *godly Jealousy*, in which Mr. *W—d* had deliver'd some *Mistakes*, would so severely inveigh against him, as in the *Testimony.* However, inasmuch as the Gentlemen of the College have not disowned it, we must consider it as *theirs.* And yet I cannot find, that *Circumcision* availeth much, or *Uncircumcision*, to the Proof of the Charges alledg'd against Mr. *W—d* ; I say, they don't avail much ; for as to Mr. *W—d*'s Expression, I declare it to have been ever disagreeable to me, as it tended to discourage the Growth of the College, which ever was, and I hope, ever will be one of the Glories of the Land ; but yet I cannot think, that the Expression will justify that Load of *Infamy*, that is laid on Mr. *W—d.* He tells us, that *he believes it may be said of the Universities, &c :* and who will say, *he doth not believe it ?* When that is fully prov'd, I will subscribe to the Charge of *Falshood* and *Lying* : Yet methinks, that *softning* Expression, should vindicate him from the Charge of *Lying.* But still it is said, that what is spoken is false in-itself, & Mr. *W—d*'s

W—d's Insinuation is *slanderous*. Yet, however, the Person may be a Man of strict *Truth*, that utters what is in itself a *Falshood*, when it doth not appear to him to be so : And if the Insinuation be slanderous, doth the Slander necessarily fall upon Mr. *W—d* ? Every Body knows, that Mr. *W—d* had no Opportunity of contracting a full Knowledge of the State of the College by his *own* Observation, but whatever Thoughts he had of it, must be all borrowed from the Information of *others* : and if his *Informers* have not dealt justly by the College, Mr. *W—d* must be *mistaken*, as the honoured President expresses himself in his *Sermon* : Yet why should he now be so severely charged as in the Testimony ? But then I ask, whether Mr. *W—d* might not *think* himself secure against *Mistake* it self, considering his *Informers* : These, so far as I can learn, were partly among those who had the *Tuition* of the College, partly those that had the *Overfight* of it, and partly those that were *Pupils* in it. Now, would not any Man suppose *such* Gentlemen to have a pretty just Knowledge of the State of the College, and so were able to lead Mr. *W—d* into a proper Conception of it ? And what could induce such Gentlemen to give an Account of the College *injurious* to it, and *false* in itself ? Especially when it might easily have been imagined, that Mr. *W—d* would be called upon to declare his *Informers*. However, I will not labour in Proof of the Point one Way or other : but yet venture to say, that unless real and substantial *Godliness* was better understood and practised within a few Years after I left the College, than when I was there, the College in general might justly be said to be in *Darkness*. Accordingly one *Tutor*, & one *Professor*, were quickly after discarded for *Immoralities* ; another *Tutor* declares himself a *Stranger at that Time* to any true vital Piety. And for *my own Part*, had I no more Religion after I left the College, than I had there, I might have *sold my Right* to Heaven for a *Mess of Pottage*, and been a Gainer by the Bargain. The Truth is, the controverted Points in *Divinity* were frequently Matters of Debate : but these were consider'd as *Technical* Things, or Matters of meer *Speculation* : we dwelt much upon the *Shell* of Religion ; but little regarded the *Pearl of great Price*. However, all this is to be understood of the Society in general, not in the least reflecting on some particular Persons, who I doubt not were Men of strict Piety : much less would I be understood to reflect on the worthy President, the Professor of Divinity, and some others in Place, who then did, and do now shine the Ornaments of their respective Stations.

Upon the whole now, the Questions before us seem to be two. *First*, Whether what Mr. *W—d* has delivered, was *true* in itself ? And *Secondly*, Whether on that Supposition the Truth was to be *spoken* ? As to the first, I believe, it must be allow'd, that whatever faithful *Care* was taken of the College, in *religious* Things (which I know little or nothing of) Religion

was

was at a *low Ebb*, among the Students *in general*. And if the Case were otherwise, the *Slander* must fall chiefly on Mr. *W—d's* *Informers*. And upon the Supposition of the *Truth* of what Mr. *W—d* said, I only ask, Whether it was not a Piece of *Service*, more acceptable to God, and likely to be more beneficial to the *College*, to *speak* of its *real Darknesh*, than to conceal this *Darknesh* by representing him as a *Slanderer*? By shewing the *College* its true State, might there not be some Prospect of its being brought out of *Darknesh into a marvellous Light*? And sure this must be allow'd a more charitable Zeal, than by endeavouring to vindicate the Honour of the *College*, to keep it in that *imaginary Light*, which is really but *Darknesh*. Doubtless our Saviour discovered more Charity to *Sardis*, when he let her know her *dying* State, than her Neighbours, in whose Reputation she was *alive*. However, I am no Judge in this Matter; but yet as far as it relates to Mr. *W—d*, cannot but conclude him greatly excusable, if not intirely justifiable.

I think it proper to add here, that I am sorry, the Gentlemen of the *College* in their Testimony have forgotten to acknowledge, for the Glory of Divine Grace, those remarkable Impressions on the *Students*, four Years ago, by the Blessing of God on Mr. *Whitefield's* Preaching to them. The Rev. Mr. *Appleton*, the worthy Pastor of *Cambridge*, in his printed Discourse from 1 Cor. 3. 6. "*Occasioned by the late powerful and awaking Preaching of the Rev. Mr. WHITEFIELD,*" I find making the following Remarks, (Page 21 and 22.) which it mayn't be amiss to repeat. "It has been
 " (*says he*) but a dead and dull Time with us on spiritual Accounts of late,
 " but small Additions made to the Church, but few coming in to own
 " the Covenant, and give themselves up to God. But blessed be God,
 " there seems *now* some *Revival* among us, there are more affected, awa-
 " kened, and convinced, and put upon their Duty, than is common a-
 " mong us: The Word preached seems to have come with greater *Pow-*
 " *er* upon the Souls of People, especially of the younger Sort. I have
 " planted, Mr. WHITEFIELD has watered, and God has given some In-
 " crease. I mention the Name of that young *Apollo*, because the most
 " of those, that are to be received to the Communion and Fellowship of
 " the Saints, have declared to me, what powerful Influence *his* fervent
 " Preaching had upon them. And surely we ought to rejoice and give
 " God the Glory, whenever he accompanies his preached Word, or any
 " of his Ordinances, with Power into the Souls of any.—And now how
 " should we all join our fervent Prayers for further Increase! Let us look
 " upon what we see this Day, as the First fruits; and let us be encourag-
 " ed to hope and pray, and use our utmost Endeavours, that there may be
 " a more glorious Harvest, by another Season."—Here in the Margin is
 inserted this Note,— "*Nov. 30. [1740.] the Day on which this Sermon*
 " was

“ was preached, seven Persons were admitted to full Communion with the Church : Eight propounded the next Season ; and a much greater Number than both these in the College, and in the Town (especially of young People) under very remarkable Convictions, and a general Seriousness and Concern among Persons of all Ages.”—We have this Account confirm’d by Col. Brattle of Cambridge, in what he publish’d some Months afterward, in the *Boston-Gazette* for April 20. and June 29. 1741. from whence I think it worth while to transcribe some memorable Lines. This worthy Gentleman, tho’ he had been endeavouring to vindicate the College in Cambridge against the Reflections in Mr. Whitefield’s Journal, yet is so impartial as to say in his first Paper as follows. —“ Before I leave the College, I beg Leave to observe, that by Mr. WHITEFIELD’S and TENNENT’S Preaching, there, the Scholars in general, have been wonderfully wro’t upon, and their Enquiry now is, *What shall we do to be saved?* Some, I believe, have lately been savingly brought home to God : These Gentlemen have planted, Mr. Appleton hath watered ; and a blessed Watering it hath been : But after all, it was God who gave the Increase,”—And in the Close of his second Paper, being a Vindication of the former against some Remarks made upon it, he thus addresses the Author of those Remarks—“ If Mr. Whitefield, you, or any other Person, will be so friendly as to convince them [*the Tutors*] of past Errors, and of the most proper Methods to promote the best Interests of the College for the future, they will be thankful to you for it, and will assuredly comply with it ; though it comes from an Enemy to them and the College, for such an one you most certainly are, for even where the Glory of God is concerned you will be silent, lest the World should think of the College different from what Mr. Whitefield had represented it. Hence it is, that you made no Mention of that so GENERAL REFORMATION in the Lives and Manners of the Scholars ; for which the Overseers thought it proper to set apart the Forenoon of this Day [June 12. 1741.] humbly to bless and praise the God of all Grace for his abundant Mercy to that Society.”—I shall but add here, Mr. Whitefield was as forward to take Notice of this Reformation, as of the former Degeneracy of the College ; and quickly wrote a Letter to the Students, dated July 25. 1741. and publish’d in the *Boston Gazette*, March 16. 1742.

And so I pass to consider another Article against Mr. W—d, respecting his Aspersions on the MINISTRY ; the Generality of whom he is said to represent as *unconverted Men*. Upon this there is a general Cry, *Scandalum Magnatum*, and a great Deal of ecclesiastical Rage has been vented. But *Tantene Animis Cœlestibus Iræ!* Has Mr. W—d any where pronounced this the *real State* of the Ministry ? No, but has only said that he *fears* it, as (if I mistake not) the Expression is. Well, but what doth he ground his

his *Fears* upon, when he is not *acquainted* with one 20th Part of the Ministry? Yet might he not have received *Information* from wise, faithful, zealous Men?—But you say, the *Information* was *false*. Why, then let the *Slander*, as in the foregoing Case, fall upon his Informers.—But still, is such a Conduct to be *tolerated* in any Gentleman, and is not the *Tendency* of it, to beget *Jealousies* and *hard Thoughts* of Ministers among their People, and has not this been the *Case in Fact*? I answer, if what Mr. W—d fears, be true in itself, I think it not only tolerable, but even *praiseworthy* in him to speak of it. As to any *Tendency* it has to beget evil Surmisings & hard Thoughts of *particular* Persons, I know of none, unless Mr. W—d had pretended to distinguish *Egypt* from *Goshen*, making Application to Individuals. Nor do I know of any *Tendency* it *ought* to have, in Relation to Ministers, unless to quicken our *Watchfulness*, excite us to *Self-Examination*, and bring us to resolve with the *Philosopher*, when hard Things were said of him, “I will live (says he) in such a Manner as that the World shall not believe them.”—Methinks, this would nobly ballance all the Danger of hard Thoughts among our People. And as to any that have questioned the State of their Ministers, meerly on such Expressions of Mr. W—d’s, I never yet met with the Man. ’Tis true, I grant, when many have known their *Ministers* load Mr. W—d with hard Censures, severe Invectives, and all possible Obloquy, when they have seen them bar their Pulpit-Doors against *him*, which were open to poor miserable Creatures; while to them he appears to preach the *Truth as it is in Jesus*, and to be himself a kind of living Gospel, and they have felt the Word of God come with Power to their Souls under his Ministrations; while this, I say, has been the Case, many I believe have been brought to question the State of their own Ministers: and truly I do not much wonder at it. But if Mr. W—d has *insinuated* any Thing as if many Ministers were *unconverted*, what need they, by the Umbrage taken at the Insinuation, pave the Way to the *Proof* of it? If he had made the *Charge*, I think, he is not half so faulty, as some who by their *Virulence* have produced the Evidence of their own Condemnation. This is to imitate the *Jews*, who keep in their own Hands the Records that condemn them. However, that I may soften Matters, shall I say, that Mr. W—d has confess’d his Expression, relating to unconverted Ministers, to be too *unguarded*? (See Answer to Dr. Chauncy, p. 9.) And for my own Part, whatever Mr. W—d fears, I on the contrary hope, and believe too, that a great, yea, the greater Part of the Ministry of this Land preach a *known* and *felt* CHRIST. Nor doth any Part of the Earth, I believe, enjoy a greater Proportion of wise, faithful, pious and judicious Ministers. Notwithstanding which, I doubt not, there is a considerable Number of poor miserable Creatures, that have no Heart in their Work, nor Concern

to answer the End and Design of it : Some there are, admirable at driving a Bargain, and would well become a Warehouse ; others who make a proper Figure in a Field, & are probably most successful there ; some of loose Principles ; and some of not very strict Lives. And to be sure, 'tis no great Wonder, if such Gentlemen as these are the great Opposers of Mr. W—d : for the Reasoning is easy, if Mr. W—d is right, we have been in the wrong all our Days. And therefore said Mr. *Sacerdos in Foro* the other Day, Mr. W—d's preaching every Day, and being always engag'd in Religion, condemns me, who have been all this Week ô running Goods, and yonder three Hogheads of Sugar, which I have been trying to sell to good Account this Fortnight, weigh heavy with Guilt : but who can bear to be condemn'd ! — In a Word, however honourably the Clergy in general deserve to be spoken of, yet so many are there of a contrary Character, that I can't but think Mr. W—d very excusable, while he expresses his Fears about an unconverted Ministry, provided his Information be good, and his Fears justly grounded : Yea, and not only excusable, but commendable too, in being jealous for his God. And therefore while others are manifesting their angry Resentments, I take this Opportunity to express my Gratitude to Mr. W—d for his great Concern about the Ministers of Christ's Kingdom, which I hope has been no Disservice to me.

I add, The Gentlemen of the College would have turn'd Mr. W—d's preaching without the Use of Notes, into an Objection against him ; as if he preach'd in an *extempore* manner, without any Study or Meditation, and in a most lazy manner, offering that which cost him nothing. — But this Reflection equally holds against the venerable first and second Generations of Ministers in *New-England*, who all (or most of them) preach'd in the like Way. And this invidious Objection turns that into a *Reproach*, which has been wont, in the Characters of Divines, to be mention'd to their Honour. Thus Dr. Calamy, in the Life of Mr. *Howe*, has a Remark, which I think is also justly applicable to Mr. W—d. " His ministerial Qualifications were singular. He could preach *off-hand* with as great Exactness, as many others upon the closest Study. He delivered his Sermons *without Notes*, tho' he did not impose that Method upon others." So Dr. Colman writes of the late Mr. *Pemberton* ; " My Wish is, that we could recover, and that the Publick might enjoy more of the valuable Discourses of this great Man ; but alas, for the most Part he only wrote *Hints* to himself, to be enlarged on in the *Pulpit*, which he wonderfully perform'd. — His Sermons appear'd to others always to cost him great Pains and much Study, &c.

Thus, dear Sir, I have given you my Thoughts pretty freely about the *Itinerancy*, and about some Parts of the *Conduct* of the *Itinerant*. — I have said nothing about the *Inconsistency* of Mr. W—d's Conduct with his Obligations as a Minister of the *Church of England* : This Objection is crush'd

to

to Death by the Reverend Mr. Foxcroft, in his Apology for Mr. Whitefield, against the Exceptions of L. K. Yet I have this to say of that Performance, that the *Maul* was rather too large, unless the *Flea* had been bigger.---I have been ever averse to *Paper-Wars*, thinking they never did much to promote Peace or Holiness: but finding the Multitude rise up in Opposition to a Gentleman, whom (with Dr. Watts, I am perswaded) God has rais'd up for great and important Ends, and furnish'd with a double Portion of his Spirit, and finding some great, and good, aged and honourable Men set themselves in Opposition to him, I said, *Great Men are not always wise, neither do the Aged always understand Judgment; therefore I said, I also will shew mine Opinion: While I gave Ear to their Words, there was none of them that convinced Mr. W----d.* And now I freely acknowledge, that from the best Observation I have been able to make of him, from the Tenour of his Preaching, his Conversation, and Life, I cannot but conclude, that in most Things he is highly commendable, in more justifiable, and in almost all very excusable: I say, in *almost all*, for I am willing to allow, Mr. W----d has his Foibles and Imperfections; He is a *Man of like Passions with others*. What then! shall I condemn him, because he is not perfect? Alas, What shall I then do with myself, and others? The *Sun* itself has its *Spots*; shall we therefore try to *put out* the *Sun*? Vain Attempt! Or shall I *shut my Eyes* against its Light? Ridiculous and absurd! Neither would I shut my Eyes against Mr. W----d's Excellencies, and only open them to behold his Weaknesses. GOD (I am well assur'd) honours him, notwithstanding all his Imperfections; and therefore so would I. In a Word, I would do by him, as God himself doth by sinful Man, damn the Sin, and glorify the Sinner. This, I think, should be our Conduct in general: and therefore I can't but wonder at the Conduct of a great many worthy Men, who resolutely bar their *Pulpit-Doors* against him, especially those who have borne so just and faithful a Testimony to the *Work of God's Grace*, which has been so remarkably reviv'd among us; which all must allow Mr. W----d to have been an eminent Instrument in the Hand of the blessed Spirit to promote. It is not, I confess, a just Conclusion, that Mr. W----d must necessarily be admitted into their Pulpits, because of such his Instrumentality: but surely it should be an Argument with them, to put the most *candid* and *charitable Construction* upon his Conduct; which, it plainly appears to me, they have not done. And then was it not a necessary Piece of Caution and Prudence, to shew their Adherence to the *Work of God*, at the same Time that they could not in all Things approve the *Instrument*? Especially since the unthinking giddy World connect the Ideas together, and conclude that every Condemnation of Mr. W-----d is a Retraction of their

A Defence of the Itinerancy and the Conduct

own *Testimony* as to the late *Work* of God. Many of these Gentlemen, I doubt not, have acted from a sincere Regard to the Glory of God, and the Welfare, Peace and Order of their Churches : but I hope they will pardon me, if I express my Fears, that the Measures *they* are taking to prevent Schisms, Disorders and Separations, will be most likely to produce 'em. For when Men see the *Vanity* of the Objections against Mr. W—d (as, I doubt not, the unprejudiced Part of the World soon will) and at the same Time behold him as a *burning and shining Light*, shining in the Brightness of the Gospel, both in Doctrine and Life, and blazing out against all Vice and Wickedness, glowing with a divine Principle of Love to God and Concern for the Salvation of Men, this appears to me strongly tending to begot hard Tho'ts of such as strenuously oppose him.—However, in this I am confident, that had I aim'd at the greatest *Confusion* in my own Church, I would have kept Mr. W—d at a Distance : but as my *Pulpit* ever has been, and ever shall be, *open to him*, so have we been ever free (so far as I can learn) from any Danger of *Confusion*.—It may be said here, You and your Church are generally *agreed* in Mr. W—d, but 'tis not so in other Places. Perhaps this may be the Case : but tho' it were not so, I am fully determin'd, that did my Parish consist only of One Hundred Persons, *Ninety* of whom were Mr. W—d's Opposers, and *Ten* only his Friends, my Pulpit should be open, if not on Lord's Days, yet on others, for Mr. W—d to preach to the *Ten*. And this I take to be the just *Medium*, between Compulsion on the one Hand, and Restraint on the other. The *Ninety* ought not to be compell'd to hear him ; the *Ten* by no Means restrain'd. The *Ninety* might gratify themselves by absenting : and 'tis in my Power, and (I thank God) in my Inclination too, to gratify the *Ten*. And so let Men but agree to gratify their Inclinations, and there could be no Cause of Complaint.

I had intended to have consider'd a Fling at Mr. W—d, as if he assum'd the Character of the *Visitor of the Churches*. Had he appeared in this Light, I should have disdain'd him : but it's plain to me, that rather *they* have in the strongest manner assum'd that Character to themselves, who have represented him as arrogating of it. — As also another Reflection, that Mr. W—d's Design was to *subvert the Constitution of our Churches*. This has ever been a common Cry, when Men would carry on their own private Schemes, *The Church is in Danger*. But where the Danger lies, and what is the Constitution Mr. W—d would set up, we are not yet told. Would he bring in *Episcopacy* ? But when did he appear a Bigot to that Church ? And why did he not endeavour to set it up in *Scotland*, as well as *New-England* ? Or is it *Presbyterianism*, that he is fond of ? 'Tis true indeed, that some in *Scotland*, would have confined him to their Church, and urg'd him to bring over some of their polish'd Shafts into *New-England*, to set up that Form of Government among us : And 'tis as true, that Mr. W—d rejected their Desire

Desire with a just Indignation. What Constitution then is it, that Mr. *W---d* would introduce among us? And how doth it appear, that he aims at the Subversion of our own? Will it be said, that Mr. *W---d* designs to bring over a Number of Gentlemen from *Scotland* and other Places, to settle among us? Supposing that to be the Case, which perhaps is only the Brat of *Jealousy*, yet how will that destroy the Constitution? Have we not in former Years entertained Strangers? And why may we not act the same Part now, & still hope to entertain *Angels*? I mean, that never fell. Are there not, besides many in the Country, two Pulpits at *Boston*, supply'd and adorn'd with the Produce of *Scotland* and *Ireland*? And yet I know not but that the Constitution remains good; and so, I believe, is like to remain, for any Designs of Mr. *W---d* against it.---- But I detain you too long.

I am sensible, *Sir*, that your Thoughts differ from mine, in some of these Things: Yet I am pleas'd, to think, we can agree even in differing. I have never yet discern'd any of those shy and reserv'd Looks, nor that cold and distant Behaviour in you, which is too evident in the Generality of Men of all Parties: An Argument of a Temper of Mind as uncomfortable, as it is dishonourable:----I am glad to find, that how much soever you dislike Mr. *W---d*, you do much more dislike the Manner in which some Gentlemen have attack'd him; and here you express your Resentments very strongly, in particular against the late Piece published by a *Clergyman* in our Neighbourhood, as having neither Reason nor Christianity in it, indeed nothing worthy the Minister, the Scholar, or the Gentleman. Truly, *Sir*, I wonder how any *Clergyman* could so far forget his own Character, while he was attacking that of Mr. *W---d*. But I hope you will forgive me, if with Regard to the Generality of Mr. *W---d*'s great Opposers, I should say, *Their Speech bewrayeth them*. And as to that Pamphlet you refer to, in particular, methinks, had I wrote such an one, and quickly after had met with some such Passage of Scripture as that, *If any Man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his*, it must have given me a fatal Blow, or rather blasted me like a Flash of Lightning. But such Performances will, I believe, answer no End, unless it be to strengthen Mr. *W---d* in the Judgment of Men of Wisdom, Integrity, and Religion. Yes, as *Titus* having begirt *Jerusalem*, and finding that the Jews were Quarrelling, Fighting, and destroying one another, told his Friend, that if he did not make Haste and attack 'em, they would quickly leave him nothing to do; so, I say, that should a few more such Pieces appear, as that you refer to, the Authors of them would cut down the Boughs they stand upon, prove the Murderers of their own Cause, and free Mr. *W---d* and his Friends from the Necessity of saying any Thing in his Behalf.

But

But I close all with a few Reflections. How *militant* is the Church below ! What Jar and Discord, Noise and Contention to be found, not only among the vain and empty Professors, but real Christians themselves, yea, and faithful Ministers too ! This, methinks, should draw Tears from our Eyes, and Sorrow from our Hearts. But yet let us not sink under this Weight. If the *Bush burns*, it shall *not be consumed* ; for the *LORD is there*. GOD is our *Strength and Refuge*, a very *present Help* in Trouble : *therefore will we not fear*, though the Earth be remov'd, and though the Mountains be carried into the midst of the Sea ; though the Waters thereof roar, and are troubled : tho' the Mountains shake with the Swelling thereof, *there is a River, the Streams whereof shall make glad the City of our God*. --- Thus the Church in old Time comforted themselves in the Day of Trouble. Thus the first Reformers comforted themselves amidst the far greater Confusions of *their Day*. And thus let us comfort ourselves, and one another. Yes, *the Lord reigneth*, let *the Earth rejoice*. Though Clouds and Darkness are round about him, yet *Righteousness and Judgment* are the Habitation of his Throne : *Light* is sown for the Righteous, and *Gladness* for the Upright in Heart. God can make the *Wrath of Man to praise him* : yea, and ever has done so. *Per Aspera ad Astra*, is the Church's Motto. *Darkness* preceded the *Light*, at the Formation of the World : And ever has done so at the Reformation of the Church. In the Visions of St. *John* we find, every *Seal*, every *Trumpet*, and every *Vial*, represented great Confusions and Convulsions in the Church : but these were preparatory to the Glory of the Church, and the Destruction of its Enemies. So *Calmet* tells us, that the Church persecuted, afterwards *victorious*, and in a *peaceful* Condition, is the true *Key* of the *Revelation*. "The whole Prophecy (says *Lowman* on the *Revelation*) after many intermediate Dangers in a State of Opposition and Trouble, ends in the "Happiness of the holy City, the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of Heaven." --- Let us then rejoice, and again rejoice, in the Prospect of that perfect Peace, and consummate Happiness, which shall be enjoyed in the World above, when the Church shall be triumphant : there the Wicked cease from troubling, and the Weary are at Rest ; the Children of God shall no more bite and devour one another : *Ephraim* shall not envy *Judah*, & *Judah* shall not vex *Ephraim* : Saints of all Ages, Nations, Complexions, & Worlds, shall meet together ; *all Saints, none but Saints*, and they themselves made *perfect*, free from those Remains of the old Man, which now are so troublesome to themselves, and render them troublesome to one another. There, I doubt not, we shall meet with many a Friend of Mr. *W---d*, and many of them also who cannot now comport with his Measures, nor see thro' the Justice and Propriety of them. And could there be *Shame* and *Sorrow* in Heaven, I fully believe, it would be found in many of the present Generation, not because they opposed Mr. *W---d*, but *fought against God* in him :--- Nor yet only in such, but in them also who (strongly attach'd to his Cause) had otherwise manifested much of their own Corruptions.--- Of your Interest in that better World, *Dear Sir*, I have no Doubt, and therefore ask your Remembrance of me at the Throne of Grace. Nor shall I cease to make Mention of you, as becomes

Your sincere

Friend and Servant,

Reading, Feb. 18.

1744. 5.

William Hobby.